DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 274 JC 850 143

AUTHOR Fadale, LaVerna M.; And Others
TITLE Assessment of Effectiveness of Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Occupational Education: Phase II.
INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Albany. Two Year Coll. Development Center.
SPONS AGENCY New York State Education Dept., Albany. Bureau of Grants Administration.
PUB DATE Sep 84
NOTE 48p.; For related documents, see JC 850 142-144.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Developmental Studies Programs; *Evaluation Criteria; Evaluation Methods; Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Questionnaires; *Remedial Instruction; State Surveys; Two Year Colleges; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

Results from the second phase of a project to investigate strategies and outcomes associated with the assessment and evaluation of developmental/remedial/basic skills programs in New York State are presented in this report. Part I introduces the Assessment of Effectiveness of Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Education project, and the major goals and concerns addressed in its two phases. Part II describes the three major activities of Phase II of the project: (1) a follow-up of all two-year colleges responding to the Phase I statewide survey to collect data on questions and issues that emerged during previous research cycles; (2) contact with 19 college sites in order to update and discuss local programs, to identify evaluation procedures used, and to determine data outcomes from these evaluations; and (3) the creation of a Task Force from personnel at the research sites to address, reach consensus, and make recommendations concerning major issues identified. After part III offers a summary and discussion of follow-up survey responses from 32 colleges, part IV analyzes the effectiveness of the developmental programs, based on self-ratings from developmental program staff; categories the program evaluation efforts of the study site colleges; summarizes selected local findings by major evaluation criteria; and provides an overview of the success level of developmental programs in the two-year colleges. Part V provides a concluding summary and a discussion of implications. The survey instrument and selected respondent comments are appended. (HB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

ED255274

JC 850 143

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS
ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS
ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS IN POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION: PHASE II

(VEA 58-84-9378)

Project Staff

LaVerna M. Fadale, Project Director
Gene M. Winter, Center Director
Joseph A. Mangano, Research Associate

Support Staff

Peggy Brooks
Norah Davis

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York at Albany

in cooperation with

Bureau of Grants Administration
State Education Department

September 1984

Organization of Report

This document consists of six major sections plus attachments and appendices. Part I introduces the study and identifies research objectives. Part II is a description of procedures used to implement the project and collect data. Part III summarizes and discusses data results. Part IV consists of a discussion of program effectiveness. Part V serves as a concluding summary and discussion of implications.

The final section, Part V, is recommended to readers who seek an overview of major highlights.

Funding for this project was provided under
PL-94-482 Title II, Vocational Education, Subpart 3
Education Amendments of 1976
Administered by the
New York State Education Department

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research study described within this report was supported through funding from the Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department. The effort was possible through the cooperation of two-year college personnel interested in and working with developmental studies programs for postsecondary occupational students. We wish to express our appreciation to all faculty, staff and administrators who provided information through the state-wide survey. We especially want to acknowledge the cooperation of liasons at the following two-year institutions which served as research sites.

1982-84:

Delhi Agricultural & Technical College
Robert Nelson, Kathy Martin

Erie Community College
Matthew Skulicz, Richard Koepsell (City Campus)
Nina Luban, Mark Arena (North Campus)
Carol Paskuly (South Campus)

Kingsborough Community College
Thelma Malle

Rockland Community College
Elaine Padilla, Margaret Martin

Schenectady County Community College
Mary Jane Dike

Suffolk Community College
Phillip Chirch (Western Campus)

Thompkins-Cortland Community College
Marlene Blumin

1983-84:

Adirondack Community College
Beth Faller

Alfred Agricultural & Technical College
Grace Barton, Midge Sanders

Capital District Educational Opportunity Center
William Chalmers

Community College of the Finger Lakes
Gretchen Starks

Corning Community College
Sandra Mark

Genesee Community College
David Peters

Junior College of Albany
Vijay Nacwan

Mohawk Valley Community College
James Deem

Suffolk Community College
Mildred Greene (Selden Campus)

Trocaire College
Wendy Patterson Curley

A share of any credit rightfully belongs to those who have contributed to the activity, but project staff accept full responsibility for any perceived shortcomings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Introduction and Overview of Intent	1
II.	Summary of Methodology	3
III.	Summary and Discussion of Data Results	5
	Reported Program Change	5
	Terminology	6
	Success Criteria and Standards	8
	Evaluation Paradigm	13
	Long/Short Term Factors	15
	Critical Competencies Identification	15
IV.	Effectiveness of Developmental Programs	17
	Self-Rated Effectiveness	17
	Application of Criteria to Local Program Evaluation	18
	Summary of Program Success Results	25
V.	Concluding Summary and Implications	27
APPENDICES		
	Appendix A	
	The Follow-up Questionnaire	30
	Appendix B	
	Selected Commentary Regarding Standards	36
	College-Wide Success Standards	37
	Performance Standards	38
	Guidelines	40

FINAL REPORT

Assessment of Effectiveness of Developmental Programs
in Postsecondary Occupational Education: Phase II
(VEA 58-84-9378)

I. Introduction and Overview of Intent

Phase II of the project, Assessment of Effectiveness of Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Occupational Education (VEA 58-84-9378), was undertaken by the Two-Year College Development Center, State University of New York at Albany, in cooperation with the Bureau of Grants Administration to continue the investigation of strategies and outcomes associated with assessment and evaluation of developmental/remedial/basic skill programs. Project goals included the following:

1. Success parameters and criteria identified during Phase I will be validated on a statewide basis and translated into evaluation paradigm(s).

2. The evaluation paradigm or model will be examined in terms of: as a guide in assessing local developmental programs, useability in programs and identification of appropriate factors of long and/or short-term evaluations.

3. The extent to which selected developmental programs are effective in achieving success will be determined.

The goals were addressed from a perspective rooted in data and information outcomes of Phase I. Major activities during the second cycle included identification of the extent of program change over a period of time, synthesizing data and procedures into an evaluation model, and summarizing assessment outcomes derived from application of strategies suggested by the model. Therefore, research concerns are restated for specificity as the following questions:

-To what extent have the developmental/remedial/basic skills programs changed over the period of one year?

-To what degree does consensus exist regarding the distinction among terms applied to these programs?

-What is the scope of data collection to ascertain program effectiveness and similarly what data are viewed as essential to such determinations? To what extent are programs successful?

-To what extent do implied or stated success standards exist at colleges which, in turn, would provide a basis of comparison in program assessments?

-To what degree are the major criteria usable in application to local developmental/remedial/basic skills programs? To what extent can standards within major criteria be identified?

-To what extent will a model(s) based on these criteria and standards serve as an effective guide for local program evaluations?

II. Summary of Methodology

The methodology employed in this project consisted of three major activities.

The first was a follow-up to all two-year colleges that responded to the Phase I statewide survey. The intent was to collect follow-up data relevant to research questions and issues that emerged during the previous cycles. Project staff developed a survey instrument designed to collect these data. Following review and revision of the questionnaire (Appendix A), it was mailed to the 48 responding institutions from Phase I.

The second strategy involved continuance of effort with the nine original sites, plus selection of ten additional colleges resulting in a total of 19 research sites for Phase II. Subsequent to the survey, project staff contacted each of the 19 sites for the purpose of updating and discussing local programs, to identify evaluation procedures used at local institutions, and to identify data outcomes from these evaluations. In addition, these consultations provided an opportunity to highlight selected items from the follow-up questionnaire and discuss implications toward reaching greater specificity. (Sites and contact persons identified on pages i and ii.)

Data from all sources were tabulated and analyzed by frequency, percentage frequencies, means and comparative summaries.

The third activity invited personnel from the research sites to serve as a Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force was to address major issues that emerged from data by determining the extent to which a consensus might be reached regarding each of the areas, and also to make recommendations appropriate to each issue. As a result, two-year college staff members met as a Task Force in late May and September to address as a group: 1) terminology, 2) factors and issues influencing program evaluation, and 3) criteria and standards appropriate to program assessment. The specific results of the

Task Force have been described in a separate publication entitled, "Assessment of Developmental Programs for Postsecondary Occupational Students: A Task Force Report."[1]

The reader is referred to that publication for further information about the Task Force since those results are not specified in this report. It must be acknowledged, however, that the input, concerns and sharing that occurred strongly influenced data interpretation and discussion of implications.

---

[1] Assessment of Developmental Programs for Postsecondary Occupational Students: A Task Force Report, Two-Year College Development Center, SUNY-Albany, September 1984.

III. Summary and Discussion of Data Results

Responses to the follow-up survey were received from 32 colleges, resulting in a response rate of 66.7%. The data source sample[1] by type of college is presented below:

59.5% State University of New York Community Colleges

15.3% City University of New York Community Colleges

12.6% State University Agricultural and Technical Colleges

9.4% Independent Two-Year Colleges

3.2% Education Opportunity Centers

Reported Program Change

During Phase I, it was found that developmental/remedial/basic skill programs consistently change as necessitated by budgetary revisions, the search for better programs, changing clientele characteristics or policy and regulatory revisions. The reported changes in local programs during a one-year period are summarized as follows:

54.8% - yes, changes occurred *45.2% - no change*

Type of change -

52.9% - program format

17.6% - entrance criteria
41.2% - credit/non-credit status
58.8% - course time frame

41.2% - placement tests

47.1% - mandated placement
23.5% - recommended placement
17.6% - student decision to enroll
5.8% - retest

23.5% - faculty source

29.4% - program budget source

17.6% - success criteria

---

[1] Survey and site data have been combined in this summary and discussion of results.

supplemental services:

17.6% - computer-assisted instruction
17.6% - designated transitional courses
17.6% - tutoring
11.7% - reinforcement of basic skills
11.7% - lab/learning center
11.7% - counseling/targeted advisement
5.8% - peer support groups
5.8% - mediated materials

systematic collection of data:

23.5% - achieve exit criteria of courses
17.6% - enrollment in subsequent regular courses
17.6% - GPA comparison
17.6% - retention rate by semester

ideal data:

17.6% - effectiveness of supplementary services
17.6% - comparable costs
17.6% - persistence in light of student goals

Reported changes most frequently occurred in program format and placement testing. These changes reflect the current concerns of credit status and mandatory placement. From input provided by sites, these and similar changes are continuing and any future follow-up could anticipate continued documentation of the on-going change process experienced by these programs.

Terminology

Terminology used to describe programs was found to vary from campus to campus and often lacked clarity of meaning among individuals who used the same terms---even though there appeared to be some sense of distinction among practitioners. As a result, the term that most accurately describes local programs was sought:

Preferred Terminology	Frequency
• Developmental	61.3%
• Remedial	20.0%
• Basic Skills Education	16.6%
• Academic Skills Education	16.6%

(20% provided multiple responses)

The majority selected "developmental" as an umbrella term which was usually preferred to describe local program/courses. However, 20% checked more than one term. The following comments are representative of rationales given for selections and serve to convey a sense of distinction among terms.

-Students exhibit a variety of deficiencies. Some require remediation, others development of skills which minimally exceed postsecondary levels. Some courses cover both remedial and standard college level work.

-The program (which is basic skills instruction) serves the student in a wide range of skill development levels; some remedial and others developmental.

-Basic skills are directed specifically to college work and survival in college.

-Although our program moves toward basic skills education, development of higher cognitive abilities (such as abstract thinking, reasoning and expanding awareness) are part of the program.

-Courses are college-credit bearing but taught at a slower pace and with support.

-The program mixes pre-college and college-level material accompanied by extensive efforts to improve self-concept and motivation.

-If pre-collegiate non-credit use remediation; then college-level skill courses use developmental.

-Developmental since our program takes students at their entry level and moves them to college level--but it is a basic skills program as well.

-Academic skills are largely remedial but study skills are developmental.

-Although entitled basic education, academic skills is more appropriate.

-Emphasis on developing and maintaining skills continues throughout sequence.

-It is difficult to separate these at times but feel there is little hope of truly remediating, thus chose the more inclusive category.

-Students develop skills to move into college courses.

-All three terms have the same meaning.

Although specific definition of the terms may continue as an issue, practitioners generally tend to distinguish among terms relative to level of student deficiency. Because of the qualified acceptance of "developmental" as a general umbrella term, the term developmental will be used in the remainder of this report to designate these programs.

Success Criteria and Standards

Data collected in Phase I resulted in four criteria that were selected most frequently as appropriate to assessing developmental programs. Verification of these criteria was sought in the follow-up with the following results:

Criteria	*Very appropriate to college program*	*Moderately appropriate to college program*	*Somewhat appropriate to college program*	*Not appropriate*	*Mean Rating*
1. Achieving exit criteria of basic skill courses	*48.3%*	*29.0%*	*3.2%*	*6.4%*	*3.4*
2. Academic eligibility to continue program as indicated by completion of next regular course in sequence to developmental/remedial/basic skill courses	*35.4%*	*19.3%*	*9.6%*	*19.3%*	*2.7*
3. Completion or graduation from career program	*16.1%*	*38.7%*	*12.9%*	*16.1%*	*2.6*
4. Achievement of individual student goals	*32.2%*	*38.7%*	*3.2%*	*9.6%*	*3.0*

N = 32 (percentages include multiple responses)

All four criteria were rated as appropriate to the local college program. The selection frequencies of "very appropriate" and "moderately appropriate" were combined resulting in the following listing in order of selection thereby suggesting a priority sequence:

	% Choosing as Appropriate (Very/Moderately) to Program
1. Achieving exit criteria of basic skill courses	77.3%
2. Achievement of individual student goals	71.0%
3. Completion or graduation from career program	54.8%
4. Academic eligibility to continue program as indicated by completion of next regular course in sequence to developmental/ remedial/basic skill courses	54.7%

N = 32 (percentages include multiple responses)

All four criteria are perceived appropriate in some degree to a majority of programs. Priority or primary emphasis is related to goals of local program, and will vary with intent. For research purposes, these four criteria are assumed acceptable as general criteria with specific application a local decision.

Phase I results indicated that few evaluation standards exist within a policy context. Program staff were often able to describe success criteria but were less sure of how to quantify success. The follow-up survey requested reactions regarding: a) the existence of standards, and b) opinions to three statements related to standards. The results are summarized as follows:

a) *Existence of standards--*

- *Existence of success standard for college:*
  - *80.6% yes*
  - *3.2% no*
  - *6.4% yes and no*
  - *3.2% don't know*
  - *3.2% no response*

- *Existence of success standard for basic skills/ developmental/remedial program:*
  - *67.7% yes*
  - *22.5% no*
  - *6.4% don't know*
  - *3.2% no response*

	Agree	Disagree	Mixed Feelings
b) *Institutions should establish collegewide success standards which could then serve as the basis for evaluating specific programs such as basic skills/ developmental/remedial.*	58.1%	16.1%	16.1%
Performance standards can be set for developmental/remedial/ basic skills programs that will be acceptable academically, socially, and politically.	45.2%	6.4%	38.7%
General standards or guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of developmental/remedial programs at different colleges should be established given the range and variability of student needs found at New York State two-year institutions.	64.5%	3.2%	25.8%

The majority opinion (64.5%) indicated that general standards or guidelines for assessing program effectiveness should be established. Open-ended comments not only raise negative cautions and doubts as to its feasibility but also suggested possible application and benefits of such guidelines. Agreement by many (58.1%) was reached regarding institutions establishing college-wide success standards which would then serve as a basis for evaluating developmental programs. Again open-ended comments pointed to in-

herent problems such as program differences and isolation, as well as positive aspects such as student motivation, bases of comparison and necessity for effective evaluation. The greatest variance of opinion was expressed regarding performance standards for developmental programs with conflicting opinions highlighted in comments such as lack of standards for other academic programs, feasibility of reaching agreement and fallout from attempting such an effort. (Selected comments attached as Appendix B.)

To further specify potential standards within the four general criteria, respondents were asked to indicate, if possible and appropriate, a performance level that might be acceptable for their respective programs. The tentative nature of these responses must be acknowledged as does applicability to local program goals, but these data do serve as indicators of current thinking. For each criterion, the frequency of selection for each standard plus the frequency of measurements used within each standard are summarized:

- *Criterion #1 - (achieve exit criteria of courses)*

f	*standard*	*f*	*measurement*
41.9%	as many students as possible---------->	69.2%	posttest score
		53.8%	classroom activities
		16.1%	lab assignments
		16.1%	course grade
		16.1%	cum average
30.8%	75% of students------->	75.0%	posttest score
		66.7%	classroom activities
		25.0%	complete course
		25.0%	course grade
9.7%	50% of students------->	33.3%	exit interview
		33.3%	posttest score
		33.3%	exit exam
6.5%	40% of students------->	50.0%	posttest score
		50.0%	specific exit criteria

3.2%	5% of students------>	100.0%	exit criteria
7.9%	(no response)		

- Criterion #2 - (achieve individual goals)

f	standard	f	measurement
32.2%	as many students as possible----------	80.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
		20.0%	percentage of students achieving goal in specified time period
		10.0%	academic progress/career choice
6.4%	75% of students-------	100.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
3.2%	40% of students-------	100.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
58.2%	(no response)		

- Criterion #3 - (completion/graduation of program)

f	standard	f	measurement
25.8%	as many students as possible----------	75.0%	graduation rate
		37.5%	graduation rate within specific time period
16.1%	40% of students-------	20.0%	graduation rate
		80.0%	graduation rate within specified time period
6.5%	50% of students-------	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	75% of students-------	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	30% of students-------	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	depends on overall rate----------	100.0%	graduation rate
42.0%	(no response)		

• *Criterion #4 - (academic eligibility)*

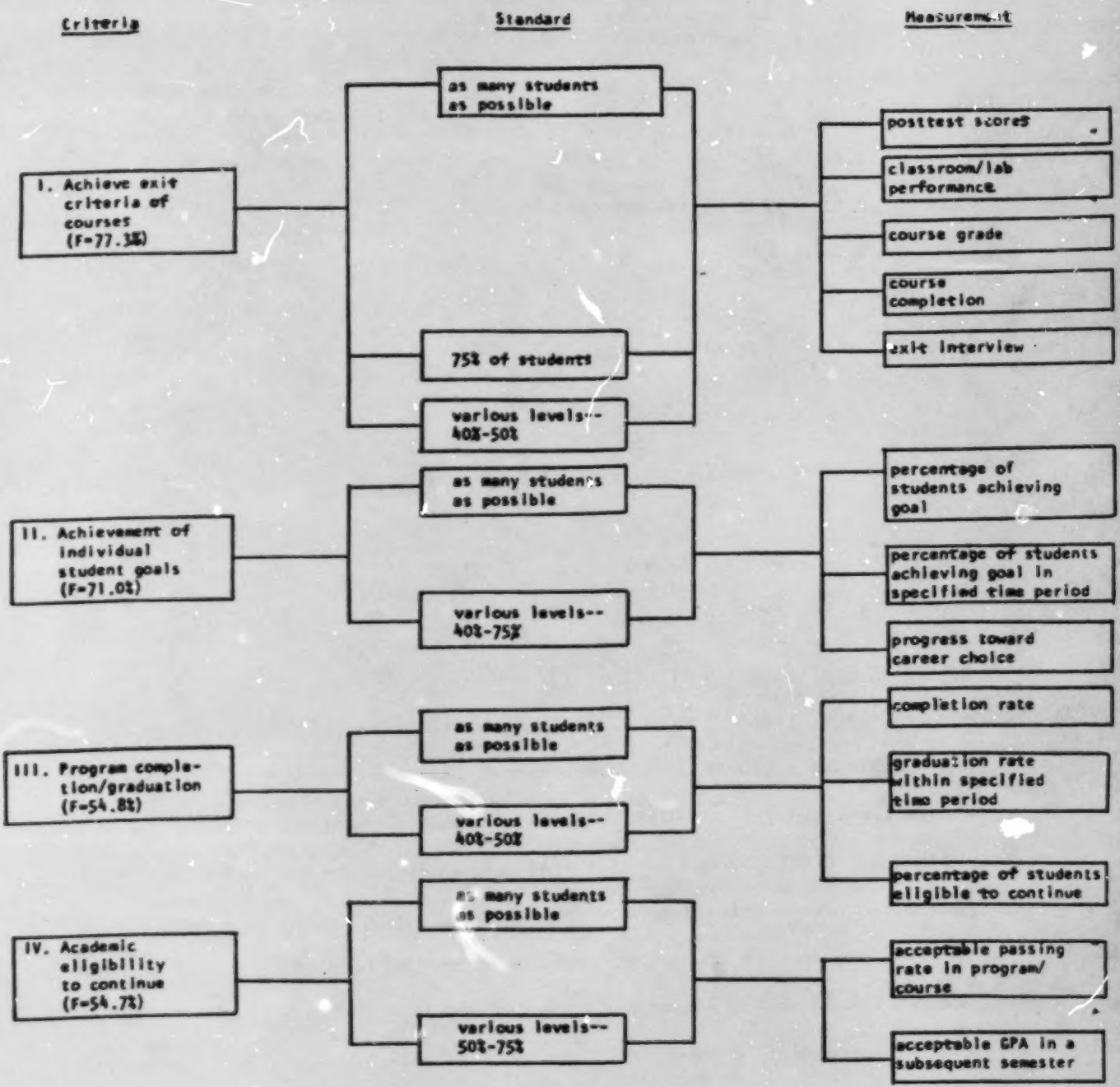
f	*standard*	*f*	*measurement*
45.1%	*as many students as possible----------*	*57.1%*	*eligible to continue*
		42.8%	*favorable passing rate in program course*
		21.4%	*favorable GPA in a subsequent semester*
		7.1%	*GPA as defined*
12.9%	*75% of students-------*	*50.0%*	*favorable GPA in a subsequent semester*
		50.0%	*favorable passing rate in program sequence*
		25.0%	*eligible to continue*
9.7%	*50% of students-------*	*66.7%*	*favorable GPA in a subsequent semester*
		33.4%	*favorable passing rate in a program sequence*
6.5%	*85%/90% of students---*	*100.0%*	*eligible to continue*
		50.0%	*favorable GPA in a subsequent semester*
3.2%	*40% of students-------*	*100.0%*	*eligible to continue*
22.6%	*(no response)*		

Evaluation Paradigm

As noted, Phase II data resulted in verification of four basic criteria appropriate to evaluation of developmental programs, a range of standards within those criteria, and relevant measurement strategies. These data provide the basis for one or more evaluation models, depending on local program goals. Each criterion, its standards and measurements might be considered as one area to emphasize; combinations would constitute a more comprehensive framework for evaluation. In any application, each college would make the necessary adjustments in concept and strategy as appropriate to each program, and to the existance of local collegewide standards. The model serves to suggest a structure within which the variance of local purpose may be addressed effectively:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EVALUATION MODEL



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Long/Short Term Factors. The nature of each criterion, and measurements applied within the respective criteria suggest applicability to both ongoing and short-term evaluations. Criterion #1, achievement of exit criteria, is a short-term measure. Criterion #3, completion of program/graduation, a long-term measure. The distinction of long versus short-term factors become less distinct when considering academic eligibility and individual student goals. The latter can both be identified as formative by some measurements (i.e., passing rate in program course, percentage achieving goal in specified time period) or summative by others (i.e., favorable passing rate in program sequence, academic progress toward career choice) depending on emphasis and interpretation of criteria. The completion of or graduation from a career program tends to stand as a summative indicator of program success since many of the measurements incorporate graduation rate in some manner.

Critical Competencies Identification

To obtain further specification of what constitutes success in a program, respondents were asked to identify those basic skills viewed as necessary for students to possess in order to perform successfully in regular career courses. The responses are summed as follows:

Basic Competencies Perceived as Necessary to Successfully Function in Regular Career Courses

77.2% - Write coherent, organized, accurate passages
63.6% - Identify, organize and comprehend ideas in reading content
31.8% - Adaptable, effective study techniques
27.2% - Compute/perform basic mathematical functions
13.6% - Technically correct communication/accurate spelling
- Basic skill functional level--9.0 or 10.0 or 11.5 grade level

9.0% - Read/write/compute at an entry or minimum level for program courses

- Ability to reason/think critically

4.5% - Problem-solving skill

- Time management skill

- Test-taking skill

- Self-assessment capability

N = 22
(Each respondent was asked to list three competencies, thus multiple responses.)

The responses tend to suggest skill areas that are viewed as essential to academic success in any career program. Writing coherent, organized accurate passages was identified by over 77% and comprehension and organization identified by over 63%. Together they embody numerous specific skills which are determined critical for success. Too, they may serve as elements within one or more of the four basic evaluation criteria.

IV. Effectiveness of Developmental Programs

Self-Rated Effectiveness

In the attempt to estimate a level of effectiveness relative to developmental programs generally, respondents were asked to rate effectiveness of their program on a seven-point scale (1 = very effective, 7 = not effective). The results are shown below:

Very Effective			*Moderately Effective*			*Not Effective*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
-	*38.8%*	*22.2%*	*16.6%*	*16.6%*	*5.5%*	-

Mean Rating: 3.2
N = 18

The same item was used in the previous cycle with nine college sites. At that time, the mean rating was 2.7 with a range of 2 through 4. In comparison, the current effectiveness mean rating stands at 3.2, .5 above last year's, reflecting a range of 2 through 6. The increased range may well be a function of a greater number of respondents. The results suggest that local staff perceive their programs to be functioning at a moderately effective level. Perhaps more informative than the self-anchored rating were the sources of evidence for the judgments,--the program data collected:

- retention figures
- faculty feedback
- results of observational research
- pre and post-tests
- score comparisons
- follow-up interviews
- success ratio statistics
- student characteristics after program experience
- professional judgment

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Application of Criteria to Local Program Evaluations

Discussion and interaction have resulted in an observation during the life of this project: efforts toward systematic evaluation are on the increase at many of the colleges. At most institutions these assessments may be categorized into one of three levels:

Level 1 - A systematic, fairly comprehensive process is in place with concurrent evaluation of the system itself in order to improve the process for greater efficiency.

Level 2 - An evaluation process has been initiated, usually in its first year. The need for revision is becoming apparent as the process is implemented and staff begin to address many of the questions raised by this project.

Level 3 - The third level may be best described as in planning stages. Few fall into this level but those that do acknowledge benefits from the experience of sharing through the project.

The 19 institutions serving as sites are categorized into the three levels as follows:

Level 1 - 32%

Level 2 - 62%

Level 3 - 6%

Of those colleges in Level 1, those with a systematic evaluation underway, the application of major criteria identified by data is apparent. Selected local findings are subsequently summarized for this report by major criteria. For each, a general program format, specific criterion

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

used, data collected and data results are outlined:

Criterion Applied: Academic Eligibility to Continue

A. *Program Format:*

Testing followed by mandated placement in developmental English course.

Specific Criterion:

- Successful completers of developmental English should successfully perform in subsequent degree-credit courses at the same rate as non-developmental students.

Data Collected:

- Comparative success rates of students (developmental and non-developmental) in required College Composition as available from Tracking Records. (Success defined as passing degree-credit courses.)

- Mean reading levels from placement scores.

Data Results:

- Developmental students pass at rates comparable with non-developmental students.

- Non-developmental students attained a higher mean grade in English.

- Statistical probability of relation between reading level and success in composition course--99.9%; thus reading is an important factor for succeeding in writing course.

B. *Program Format:*

Testing for placement in skill area courses; supplemental services.

Specific Criterion:

- Improved persistence rates

Data Collected:

- Summary of grades (semester and annual)

- Number of students enrolled in developmental courses

- Number of students served in laboratories and other supplemental services (such as tutoring)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Transfer and placement frequencies

- Data from records of developmental students (comparison of completion rates, enrollment patterns, grade point averages, and persistence rates for fall and spring entry students)

Data Results:

- Over time, a greater proportion of developmental students progressively complete more terms and persist longer

- Over one-third of students completing developmental courses are academically successful compared to one-fourth of students with comparable entry skills who did not complete developmental courses

- Spring entry students (21%) tend to be less successful than fall entry students (35%) when success is defined as 1.8 GPA or higher

C. *Program Format:*

Placement testing; courses in reading/writing, math; learning center.

Specific Criterion:

- Academic progress and performance of developmental students in regular and developmental courses work

Data Collected:

- Transcripts, schedules, historical files on computer printouts

- Faculty and administration discussions

Data Results:

- Proportion of students overcoming deficiencies

- Proportion requiring additional developmental work

- Grade distributions and/or averages

- Failure rates in program courses

- Performance comparisons among three student groups--those who overcame skill deficiencies, those in process of overcoming deficiencies, and the general student population

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Criterion Applied: Achieve Exit Criteria of Developmental Program/Courses

D. Program Format:

Entrance testing; courses in reading/writing, study skills, math; learning center.

Specific Criterion:

- Satisfactorily meeting criteria set for exit from developmental courses

Data Collected:

- Number of students
- Pre and post scores achieved on placement test
- Difference of pre and post scores
- Program area
- Course grades
- Selected follow-through grades in sequential courses
- Entry date

Data Results:

- More students receive passing [mean % = 51.4%; range of 69% (study skills) to 33% (LA)] than failing grades [mean % = 10.1%; range of 19% (study skills) to 1.04% (reading)]; 20.9% (average) need continued work.
- Mean/median of pre and post test scores show gain [mean increase of 4 points (writing) to 9 points (reading)]
- Proportion of students eligible to continue enrollment is greater than those ineligible
- 59% experience success in sequential English course

Criteria Applied: Combination of Exit Criteria and Academic Eligibility

E. Program Format:

Placement testing; reading/writing skill courses and math laboratory/modules.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Specific Criterion:

- Success rate in developmental courses
- Selected continuation rates

Data Collected:

- Pre and post scores on placement tests
- Course grades
- GPA cum in concurrent regular courses
- Selected student interviews

Data Results:

- Mean and standard deviation of pre and post scores--significant difference in writing and reading scores ($> .01$)
- Proportion eligible to continue in program sequence
- Percentage receiving passing grades in math skills courses (42%)

F. *Program Format:*

Entry criteria; courses (reading, writing, math) and modules with test-out alternative.

Specific Criterion:

- Rate of retention/continued enrollment

Data Collected:

- Number of students enrolled in developmental program
- Tracking of developmental students through program and follow-up
- Documentation of reasons for leaving
- Student grade distribution in each developmental course
- Retention rate on a semester basis
- Retention rate by program area

Data Results:

- Retention range for developmental students enrolled in career programs during the subsequent semester (63%)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Proportion of students who continue in career program (59%) as compared to those who change career program (17%)

- Identification of career areas with higher (i.e., Business) to lower retention rates (i.e., Human Service)

- Grade distribution in developmental offerings

- Identification of external factors as major cause for non-continuance--transportation, health, family, personal problems, legal problems and questionable attitude.

Criterion Applied - Selected Focus Within Academic Eligibility

H. *Program Format:*

Placement testing; courses in skill areas; learning center services.

Specific Criterion:

- Dollar benefit to college of selected supplemental service---peer tutoring

Data Collected:

- Number/hours of tutoring

- Number of tutees receiving passing grades

- Average grade received by tutees

- Direct cost of program

- Estimated tuition income from successful continuing tutees

Data Results:

- Positive initial information for selected comparison of dollar benefit if refined by averaged returning figures for students not receiving tutoring, and/or application of college retention ratio to dollar amount

I. *Program Format:*

Mandated placement testing; courses in English/Language Skills

Specific Criterion:

- Comparative performance of developmental and non-developmental students

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Data Collected:

- Grade point average
- Quality point average for regular courses
- Case study interviewing

Data Results:

- Student who enrolled and completed developmental course work achieved a higher QPA than those that did not complete the work
- Interviewing indicated commitment and attitude were important factors in success

J. *Program Format:*

Mandated placement testing; courses in skill areas (reading/writing, math) supplementary services based in learning center.

Specific Criterion:

- Academic progress to reflect overcoming skill deficiencies

Data Collected:

- Grades and academic records
- Tracking of selected students

Data Results:

- Percentage of students performing at 2.0 cum or above (31%) and completed developmental program by evidence of skill competency
- An additional 25% attained a grade point average of 1.8 through 2.5 but had failed to complete developmental courses
- High risk courses identified in order that students without the necessary skills in reading or math to cope are so advised.

K. *Program Format:*

Designated basic skill courses supplemented by learning center services to support learning disabled

Data Collected:

- Service frequency categorized by purpose
- Type of assistance needed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Cumulative average

- Academic status

Data Results:

- For target group, 56% of participating students were in good academic standing while 2.5% of non-participating students with similar deficiencies achieved the same status

- 32% of actively participating students in target group placed on probation compared with 60.6% of non-participants

Summary of Program Success Results

Based on the outcomes of the previously outlined local evaluations plus input from sites and other colleges, the following statements reflect the success level of developmental programs in New York State two-year colleges:

- The proportion of students achieving developmental skill course exit criteria exceeds the proportion who fail.
- Students who successfully complete a developmental skill program or set of courses usually achieve a subsequent success rate which is comparable to the overall success rate of the college.
- Students who do not successfully complete the developmental courses are more likely to fail in subsequent regular courses.
- Developmental students who achieve success in a subsequent semester of regular or mainstreamed courses are more likely to achieve success with each succeeding semester.
- Most developmental students require a minimum of 2½-3 years to complete a career degree.
- Increasingly, developmental programs are attempting to incorporate specific and/or prerequisite skills necessary to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

function in career content areas, and are doing so through peer cooperation.

- Pre and post-testing, using the respective placement tests, usually result in gain scores for a majority of students who meet exit criteria.
- Students initiating self-referral for additional work demonstrate a higher overall success rate than students who do not seek additional help.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

V. Concluding Summary and Implications

The major concerns of this research effort were stated as the following:

- development of an evaluation paradigm(s) or model based on success parameters identified and validated by research data
- examination of the model in terms of usability and appropriateness for local assessments both long and short-term
- determine the extent to which developmental programs are generally successful.

The results of Phase II address these general concerns, the more specific research questions and related issues that emerged during the course of the study. These results are subsequently summarized.

- The majority of developmental programs in New York State two-year colleges tend to continually change and revise program format, placement testing, and to a lesser degree faculty and budget sources, success criteria, supplemental services offered, evaluation data and identification of desirable evaluation data.
- Consensus on terminology was sought in order to more accurately distinguish among programs, and to determine whether agreement could be reached regarding the use of terms. In general, developmental was preferred by a majority. However, this preference was tempered for use as an umbrella term only. It was generally perceived that other terms such as remedial and basic skills may be part of a developmental effort with each addressing a different level of deficiency exhibited by students. (Because of the general acceptance of developmental as an appropriate umbrella term, this report and project has used the word developmental to include all of the programs designed to overcome skill deficiencies.)
- Local efforts to design systematic collection of relevant data and an effective evaluation process are increasing. The necessity of a clear, specific statement of local program goals to guide any evaluation is recognized by most two-year college personnel. At any one college, the evaluation process may be found at various stages of development and refinement.
- The project resulted in the identification of four primary evaluation criteria (course exit criteria, individual goals, program completion, academic eligibility) and suggested standards within those criteria that might serve as a framework for local program prescription of an appropriate evaluation effort. The criteria tend to establish categories of both short and longer

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

term assessment points that have the potential for use in formative and summative evaluation. The need for local flexibility to accurately reflect local program goals and objectives was underscored. The general intent of the criteria and the initial attempt to set or identify potential standards are seen as positive steps toward providing a framework for planning. Thus the model(s) developed from these criteria and standards is viewed positively as long as right of local modification remains a part of that model.

- Over 50% of the cooperating colleges shared the results of their local evaluations of developmental programs. The results strongly suggest that students who successfully complete the developmental program perform at levels which usually compare favorably with non-developmental students.

- In the attempt to provide a basis for comparison to a college-wide standard, or other standards external to the program project efforts sought to determine the existence of such standards. Highlighting their presence or their lack thereof facilitates consideration of success indicators beyond those stemming from the content of developmental courses only.

- Staff members continue to recognize the correlation of client capability to program success. Too, concerns remain regarding expectations held for programs by others given the range of deficiencies, multiple and changing needs of students. Thus, there is often reluctance to highlight data in isolation from a comparative base. Often results are more positive than might be perceived when compared to college-wide performance or other controlled outcome indicators.

- Placement testing provides data which helps to identify the range of deficiencies exhibited by students thereby establishing a baseline profile from which to measure the elements of success. It also provides a basis for identifying students with extreme deficiencies. The expectations of success for these students may need to be adjusted when evaluation criteria are established.

- There is a general acceptance that success is best indicated by the level of performance in courses subsequent to the successful completion of the developmental program. The implementation of tracking systems, monitoring of course grades at various time points and recording of frequency of services provided, in addition to the ongoing computerized records kept by the individual colleges, combine to serve as a comprehensive data base that can be used to assess success of individual students and the program itself. However some staff time and expense is necessary to bring the potential into a reality and that extra allocation is the first to go when budget reductions occur.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When the project was begun two years ago, the principal focus was on determining appropriate evaluation criteria and the extent to which consensus could be reached on models, criteria and standards for assessing the effectiveness of developmental programs.

Research efforts have resulted in a comprehensive evaluation model and evaluation criteria over a series of time points that extend beyond the program itself. Although all two-year college staff would not embrace the total model, it is fair to say that there is general agreement with some parts of it. The differences stem not so much from beliefs about evaluation as from differences in programs and in academic disadvantages of students. Research has detailed the similarities among programs as well as the strong feelings from many local staff that the evaluation model and criteria must allow for local adaption based on particular program objectives and characterisitcs of its students.

There is less consensus on evaluative standards. An acceptable success rate, however defined, is like many colleges' reaction to retention rates; increased retention is the goal rather than stating an arbitrary percentage as being acceptable.

Less than a majority of colleges perform systematic comprehensive program evaluations, but nearly all are continually engaged in assessing effectiveness of segments of their programs or courses. Staff continually search for the more effective test, method or combination of resources. Many program staff do not have the time or institutional power to mount a comprehensive evaluation because of the complex interaction of variables and the scope of the information that would be required.

It is generally recognized by program staff that there are students who possess skill deficiencies at levels that cannot be adequately addressed,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and perhaps should not be, at the college level. Yet they will continue to be admitted and attempts will be made to help them succeed even though the program was not designed for students with such extreme deficiencies. While most two-year college developmental program staff continually seek to improve programs and illustrate their successes through local evaluation reports when resources are available, they also recognize the presence of issues that can only be addressed not solved, of questions that can be discussed but not answered and of actions which must be taken but not necessarily embraced. Their programs are important but not the highest priority when support questions are decided. They feel that general college standards of success may exist but become elusive when they seek to apply them to their higher risk students.

There is no doubt that in the future local staff will continue to address as many of the impinging factors on a local and a statewide basis as is possible given the context of today's two-year colleges in New York State, the scope of their mission, their support, and the characteristics of the clientele they serve; even though they'll never be as successful as they and their critics desire.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX A

The Follow-Up Questionnaire

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Developmental Studies Program Assessment Questionnaire

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York at Albany
December 1983

Please respond as appropriate to your local developmental/remedial/basic skills programs or courses.

_____ (College)

_____ (Name & title of person completing this form)

1. *One of our Phase I findings was the constantly changing nature of developmental/remedial programs due to the desire for improvement, budgetary factors or student needs. Therefore, a copy of your completed questionnaire (Spring 1983) is enclosed. Please review your responses and update changes only on the blank copy of the questionnaire that is enclosed for your convenience. Do not respond to any items that are identical to your Spring 1983 responses.* *

2. *Which of the following terms best describes your program or courses?*

___developmental ___remedial ___basic skills education

___academic skills education ___other (specify)_____

Explain the reason for your choice: _____

_____

_____

If available, would you share a curriculum/policy statement concerning your program with us?

___yes, enclosed ___not available ___not able to

3a) *What data are being collected this year to indicate the effectiveness of your program?*

_____

_____

b) *What data are not being collected that you wish could be or feel should be?*

_____

_____

_____

*1983 Questionnaire is not attached; refer to Assessment of Effectiveness Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Occupational Education, Two-Year College Development Center, SUNY-Albany, September 1983.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. a) *To your knowledge, is there an implied or stated standard for success at your college?*

___ yes ___ no ___ don't know/not aware of any

b) *To your knowledge is there an implied or stated standard for success in your basic skills/developmental/remedial program? (i.e. retention/passing rate equal to that of college as a whole)*

___ yes ___ no ___ don't know/not aware of any

c) *Regarding standards of success, please express your agreement or disagreement with the following statements and explain your position for each:*

1. *Institutions should establish college-wide success standards which could then serve as the basis for evaluating specific programs such as basic skills/developmental/remedial.*

___ agree ___ disagree ___ mixed feelings

Because: _____

_____

2. *Performance standards can be set for developmental/remedial/basic skills programs that will be acceptable academically, socially, and politically.*

___ agree ___ disagree ___ mixed feelings

Because: _____

_____

3. *General standards or guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of developmental/remedial programs at different colleges should be established given the range and variability of student needs found at New York State two-year inrtitutions.*

___ agree ___ disagree ___ mixed feelings

Because: _____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

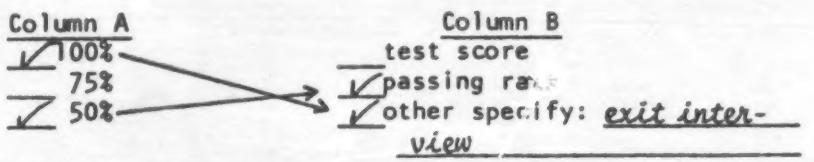
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. a) For each criteria please indicate the extent to which each criterion applies to your developmental/remedial/basic skill program by circling the appropriate number.

Criteria	Very appropriate to college program	Moderately appropriate to college program	Somewhat appropriate to college program	Not appropriate
1. Achieving exit criteria of basic skill courses	4	3	2	1
2. Academic eligibility to continue program as indicated by completion of next regular course in sequence to developmental/remedial/basic skill courses	4	3	2	1
3. Completion or graduation from career program	4	3	2	1
4. Achievement of individual student goals	4	3	2	1
5. Other criteria (specify): _____	4	3	2	1

b) To help identify standards for the above criteria, please check the level(s) that fit your developmental/remedial/basic skill program; and then draw a line to link the level(s) (Column A) to the appropriate measurement (Column B).

Sample:



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Column A	Column B
Level of Standard	Measurement

Criterion #1: (achieve exit criteria of courses)

Column A	Column B
___as many students as possible	___posttest score
___75% of students	___classroom activities
___50% of students	___other, specify: _____
___40% of students	_____
___other, specify: _____	___other, specify: _____
_____	_____

Criterion #2: (eligible to continue)

Column A	Column B
___as many students as possible	___eligible to continue
___75% of students	___favorable GPA in a subsequent semester of study
___50% of students	___favorable passing rate at specified time point in regular program sequence
___40% of students	___other, specify: _____
___other, specify: _____	_____
_____	

Criterion #3: (graduation)

Column A	Column B
___as many students as possible	___graduation rate
___75% of students	___graduation rate within specified time period (such as 5 semesters)
___50% of students	___other, specify: _____
___40% of students	_____
___other, specify: _____	
_____	

Criterion #4: (achieve individual goals)

Column A	Column B
___as many students as possible	___percentage of students achieving goal
___75% of students	___percentage achieving goal within specified time period
___50% of students	___other, specify: _____
___40% of students	_____
___other, specify: _____	
_____	

Other criterion, specify: _____

_____

Specify level of standard:	Specify measurement:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

c) *Assume that you must select one criterion standard for your program. Please indicate which one would be most applicable to your program and explain why.*

_____

_____

_____

6. *Based on your local program, what three basic competencies do you believe students must have in order to function successfully in regular career courses? (i.e., understand a reading assignment as demonstrated by capability to identify major concepts)*

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

7. *If possible, please respond briefly: How would you rate the effectiveness of the developmental/remedial courses at your college?*

Very effective			Moderately effective			Not effective
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

On what do you base your assessment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return on or before January 30, 1984 to:

Dr. LaVerna M. Fadale
Project Director
Two-Year College Development Center
SUNY-Albany
135 Western Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX B

Selected Commentary Regarding Standards

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX B--Selected Commentary Regarding Standards

College-wide Success Standards:

Programs college-wide are radically different from one another in terms of content (skills versus material), student ability, and expectations about successful students.

Otherwise standards within the college may vary.

Often basic skills programs are promoted in isolation from the regular instruction program.

At the same time the college recognizes its diverse clientele, it is also committed to establishing fair and consistent standards for entry into mainstream courses and for completion of degree requirements.

Not sure how one can track or measure this element.

Any program can be compared to certain givens. The college-wide comparison needs to be interpreted appropriately.

To evaluate movement or success we use/have comparison standards.

Needs differ for different department.

We have a college-wide student progress policy applicable to all courses.

The success of early programs must be measured against specific objectives as well as the general goals of the institution.

Success comes in many forms. As a result one needs to know what standards are being used, whether it is realization that a student is not ready for college, or completion of developmental courses, or graduation from college.

Success standards for basic skills/developmental/remedial programs are useless without entrance/exit criteria for regular academic work.

Standards help students' motivation. All students should have standards applied.

Would reduce variability of scoring and increase validity of grades.

Communication of such student consumer information is vital.

Necessary for measuring effectiveness of programs.

Faculty and students need to know where they stand in relation to others.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What would these standards be? I have found that it can be extremely restrictive to establish outside standards or measures of an objective nature since so much of remediation is subjective.

Measuring those standards can be difficult and they often ignore the "affective" sphere.

We are dealing with an "at risk" group whose success rate may be expected to differ.

Effect would be detrimental to the program.

Performance Standards:

Since the client group is high risk, acceptable academic standards will result in high attrition, and thus will be unacceptable socially (accusations of racism) and politically (since politics plays the numbers game).

The developmental program represents an instructional service to members of the student body. This service must be consonant with all other instructional efforts.

This policy has been established and is working effectively.

Socially? Politically related to state funds? Must look at specific needs in each area. Interesting.

They would communicate to students and faculty the success and objectives of the program.

A successful developmental program enables the student to achieve the standard level necessary for successful graduation.

Needs differ for different departments.

Not sure.

Social and political goals are often in direct conflict with performance standards of developmental programs.

They should be consistent with the local norms (found at other two-year colleges).

But only as performance standards are set for other academic programs.

Standards must be set and applied fairly.

It's been done elsewhere with relative success.

Politically???

Our educational system (and society) must require and guarantee acceptance levels of competency.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Those big "three" don't often agree. I believe in cooperation, but from past experience, one agency sets the guidelines for the other to live up to without consulting the other agency.

Measuring those standards can be difficult.

These can be set <u>if</u> carefully articulated, and if beginning standards for "regular" courses are clear.

<u>Guidelines</u>:

This would have to be sensitively done, wording easy statistical standards such as attrition rate, and recognizing the vast difference between developmental programs and degree programs. Such guidelines might be useful, but only after similar guidelines for assessment had been established for degree programs statewide.

There should be some generally accepted standards for a two-year degree.

I wonder whether different colleges means all colleges. If so, with well defined program objective this would be possible.

It is necessary to establish consistency of standards in higher education.

I think it would be very nice to have some guidelines or standards. These should not be requirements, but guides.

Not only would strengths and weaknesses stand out but areas for short/long range planning would become more obvious to those too close to the program.

Each institution has special population, special needs.

If utilized would improve existing programs.

Not sure.

The students needs should be met irregardless of the developmental/ remedial program that the student attended.

Be interesting to compare results and help in program evaluation.

1) Who would establish the guidelines--the practitioner or an outside body?
2) Process guidelines for evaluating programs would make more sense. Currently each program can select its own evaluation criteria, methodology, etc. so programs are not really comparable.

Effectiveness cannot be measured without consideration of the students' entry levels.

Would help evaluate the effectiveness of each program.

Local standards are appropriate.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

They should be accountable for their effectiveness to the extent that other programs area.

Would be a help in evaluation of program.

Our institutions are more similar than different. We need to support and advise each other.

This statement accounts for the individual differences among students with basic skills needs, yet admits the need for guidance in such programs.

This may help to clear up ambiguity and provide college-wide support for developmental programs.

With the exception that community colleges accept a much different group. I believe two sets of standards would be better.

No useful purpose would be served.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
8118 Math-Sciences Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

FEB 8 1985

BEST COPY AVAILABLE